

The Sixty-four Destructions according to the *Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*

A. Introduction

Among the Sthavira tenets cited by Daśabalaśrīmitra in his *Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*, which is preserved only in Tibetan translation, is a passage in prose and verse on the “sixty-four destructions” of the world or universe.¹ The citation occurs in Chapter 8, “Analysis of the Aeon” (*Kalpa-viniścaya*).² I have not been able to trace an *exact* counterpart of the passage in Pāli, although the prose is close to that of a number of texts, such as the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvīnī*. The verse is very close to one cited without attribution (or ascribed to the “old masters”: *ten’ āhu porāṇā*)³ in later Pāli works such as the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvīnī*, *Sārasaṅgaha*,⁴ *Lokadīpakaśāra*,⁵

¹For Daśabalaśrīmitra and his work see Peter Skilling, “The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra”, *Buddhist Studies Review* vol. 4, no. 1 (1987), pp. 3–23, and “Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation”, *JPTS* XIX (1993), pp. 140–42.

²Title from end of chapter: Peking Tanjur (Q) 43a6, Derge Tanjur (D) 140a5, *bskal pa rnam par nes pa ste* (Q: *žes bya ba* for *ste*, D) *l'u
brgyad pa'o*.

³For the “old masters” or “ancients”, see E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1953, Appendix II.

⁴Genjun H. Sasaki (ed.), *Sārasaṅgaha*, Oxford, 1992, p. 314,20–21. Sasaki notes the occurrence of the verse in the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*, *Sutta-saṅgaha-aṭṭhakathā*, and *Abhidhammasaṅgaha-sanne*.

⁵Phra Saṅgharāja Medhaṅkara, *Lokadīpakaśāra*, National Library, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, B.E. 2529 [1986], p. 513,5–6.

Mahākappalokasañṭhānapaññatti,¹ and *Aruṇavatīśūtra*.² The first two works were composed at Pulathinagara (Polonnaruva) in Ceylon: the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvī* by Sumaṅgala in the 12th century,³ and the *Sārasaṅgaha* by Siddhatha at about the beginning of the 14th century.⁴ The *Lokadīpaka-sāra* was composed by Medhaṅkara Mahāthera at “Mutta-managara, known as Siriratanapura” (present-day Martaban) in Rāmaññadesa in the 14th century.⁵ The dates and provenance of the *Mahākappalokasañṭhānapaññatti* and *Aruṇavatīśūtra* are unknown; the latter is a non-canonical Pāli sutta, perhaps from Siam of the Ayutthaya period. The verse is cited in Pāli in a Thai cosmological text, *Description of the Three Worlds* (*Traibhūmikathā*), traditionally held to have been composed by Phya Lithai in the mid-14th century in the Kingdom of Sukhothai (Sukhodaya).⁶

¹ *Mahākappalokasañṭhānapaññatti*, typescript “transcribed from the palm-leaf MS. in the Royal Library at Bangkok, for the use of Professor Sylvain Levy (sic), by order of H.R.H. the Prince of Chandaburi. Bangkok, 1926”, p. 5.22–23.

² *Aruṇavatīśūtra* in *Lokuppatti Aruṇavatīśūtra Pathamamūla Pathamakap lae mūlatañtraiy*, National Library, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, B.E. 2533 [1990], p. 52.7–8.

³ Sasaki, p. ix.

⁴ Sasaki, pp. vii–viii.

⁵ *Lokadīpaka-sāra*, p. 617.6 (colophon); B.C. Law, *The History of the Buddha's Religion* (*Sāsanavamsa*), 1st ed. Calcutta, 1952; reprint Delhi, 1986, pp. 53, 56.

⁶ *Traibhūmikathā ru traibhūmiphraruang*, Fine Arts Department, BE 2526 [1983], p. 139; translated by Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology*; (Berkeley, 1982), p. 306; translated by G. Cœdès and C. Archaimbault, *Les Trois Mondes* (Paris: École Française de l'Extrême-Orient, 1973), pp. 216–17.

The theory is the same as that of the Vaibhāśikas, as outlined in the *Lokaprajñapti* and presented in detail in the *Abhidharmakośa*, *Abhidharmadīpa*, and *Sārasamuccaya*.¹

The present article gives translations (Part B) and texts (Part C) of Daśabalaśrīmitra's citation, along with relevant passages from the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvī*, *Visuddhimagga*, *Lokaprajñapti* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

B. Translations

1. *Śaṃskṛtāśaṃskṛta-viniścaya*

According to the system of the *Āgama*² of the Ārya Sthavira school (*nikāya*), there are sixty-four destructions (*saṃvatta*) [of the world]. Therein, there are fifty-six destructions by fire, seven destructions by water, and one destruction by wind, in this manner:

- (1) there are seven destructions by fire in succession (*nirantaram*), [then] one by water;
- (2) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (3) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (4) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (5) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (6) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (7) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (8) after that, seven by fire, and one destruction by wind.

¹ Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāśāprabhāvṛtti*, Patna, 1977, pp. 116–17; *Sārasamuccaya-nāma-abhidharmāvatāra-tikā*, Q5598, Vol. 119, *mñon pa thu*, 354b5–8. See below for the *Lokaprajñapti* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

² *lung* = *āgama*: from the style of this and other citations it is clear that Daśabalaśrīmitra uses *āgama* in the sense of “tradition” or “authoritative text”, rather than of “canonical text” in the sense of one of the four *Āgamas* (equivalent to the first four Nikāyas of the Pāli canon).

Thus there are altogether sixty-four destructions.¹ Further, it is stated:

After each seven turns by fire
each eighth [turn] is by water:
when the one final [turn] by wind is counted
the sixty-four [destructions] are complete.

2. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvī*

In this manner the world is destroyed seven turns by fire, and the eighth turn by water; then again seven turns by fire, and the eighth turn by water: in this manner eight groups of eight are completed when [the world] is destroyed for a final turn by water. ... Further, this is stated:

Seven times seven turns by fire
each eighth [turn] by water:
the sixty-four [destructions] are complete
when there is one final [turn] by wind. 2

3. *Visuddhimagga*³

[The world] is destroyed for seven turns in succession by fire and the eighth turn by water; then again seven turns by fire and the eighth by water, and when it has been seven times destroyed by water at each eighth turn, it is again destroyed for seven turns by fire. Sixty-three æons pass in this way. And now the air takes the opportunity to usurp the water's turn for destruction, and in destroying the world it

¹Cf. *Dīghanikāya-āṭṭhakathā* (Nālandā ed.) I 183,15, *ekasmim kappe catusatthi antarakappā nāma honitī*.

²The translation by Cœdès and Archaimbault changes the number in the Pāli from sixty-three to sixty-four: “Sept fois [vient] le feu, la huitième fois c'est l'eau. [Ainsi] jusqu'à soixante-quatre fois ; le vent vient seulement une fois.”

³Translation from Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)* by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 3rd ed. (Kandy, 1975), Chapter XIII ¶65 (p. 463).

demolishes the Subhakīha Brahmā World where the life-span is the full sixty-four æons.

4. *Lokaprajñapti*

There are three destructions: destruction by fire, destruction by water, and destruction by wind. ... There are seven destructions by fire, and one by water; there are seven destructions by water, and one by wind.

5. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*

In what sequence do these destructions occur? In succession, “Seven by fire”: there are seven destructions by fire. Then, “One by water”: immediately after seven destructions by fire, there is one destruction by water. “When seven [destructions] by water have occurred in this manner, again seven by fire”: when seven destructions by water have occurred in this sequence, then there are seven destructions by fire. “After which there is the destruction by wind”: after that there is one destruction by wind. ... There are fifty-six destructions by fire, seven destructions by water, one destruction by wind: thus the *Prajñaptibhāṣya* statement that “the life-span of the Śubhakṛtsna gods is sixty-four æons” is correctly interpreted.¹

¹*Lokaprajñapti*, Q5597, Vol. 115, *mnon pa khu 19a3 dge rgyas kyi lha rnams kyi tshe'i tshad kyi mtha' ni bskal pa drug cu rtsa bži ste*. Cf. *Sārasamuccaya*, *thu 354b7 de ltar byas na gdags pa bšad pa las dge rgyas kyi lha rnams kyi tshe bskal pa drug cu rtsa bži thub bo žes bya ba legs par bšad pa yin no*.

C. Texts

1. *Samskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya*¹

'phags pa gnas brtan pa'i sde pa'i luñ gi tshul las kyañ
 'jig pa ni drug cu rtsa bži ste/ de la mes 'jig pa lha bcu rtsa
 drug go/² chus 'jig pa ni bdun no// rluñ gis 'jig pa ni gcig go/
 'di lta ste/ bar med par mes 'jig pa bdun no// chus gcig go/ de
 nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus
 gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun
 no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas
 mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// rluñ gis
 'jig pa ni gcig go/ de ltar bsdus te 'jig pa ni drug cu bži'o//
 yañ gsuñs te/

me yis lan ni bdun bdun la// brgyad pa brgyad pa chu yis
 so//

gañ tshe rluñ mchog gcig bgrañs na// drug cu bži ni
 rdzogs par 'gyur//

žes so/³

2. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvī*⁴

tathā hesa loko sattavāresu agginā vinassati aṭṭhame vāre
 udakena, puna sattavāresu agginā aṭṭhame vāre udakenā ti
 evam pi aṭṭhasu aṭṭhakesu paripuṇṇesu pacchime vāre vātena
 vinassati ... vuttam pi c' etam

¹ Daśabalaśrīmitra (sTobs bcu dpal bses gñen), 'Dus byas dari 'dus ma byas rnam par nes pa, Peking (Q) 5865, Vol. 146, no mtshar bstan bcos ño, 24a1–5; Derge (D) 3897, Vol. 108, dbu ma ha, 124b2–5.

² go / Q : go // D, throughout.

³ Lines a and b are identical to the Pāli: *me yis* = *aggina*; *lan* = *vārā*; *bdun bdun la* = *satta satta*; *brgyad pa brgyad pa* = *aṭṭhame aṭṭhame*; *chu yis so* = *odakā*. Line c has one variant: *gañ tshe* = *yadā*; *rluñ mchog* = *vāyuvaro*; *gcig* = *eko*; but *bgrañs* = “counted” rather than *siyā*. In line d, *drug cu bži* = *catusaṭṭhi*; *rdzogs par 'gyur* = *puṇṇā*.

⁴ Thai script edition, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgahapāliyā saha abhidhammatthavibhāvī nāma abhidhammatthasaṅgahaṭīkā*, Mahāmukūṭa-rājavidyālaya, Bangkok BE 2516 [1973], Chapter 5, p. 162,10–17.

satta sattagginā vārā aṭṭhame aṭṭhamodakā
 catusaṭṭhi yadā puṇṇā eko vāyuvaro siyā.

3. *Visuddhimagga*¹

evaṁ vinassanto pi ca nirantaram eva satta vāre agginā
 vinassati (Mm: *nassati* HOS) aṭṭhame vāre udakena, puna
 satta vāre agginā, aṭṭhame vāre udakenā ti evam aṭṭhame
 aṭṭhame vāre vinassanto sattakkhattum udakena vinassitvā
 puna satta vāre agginā vinassati (Mm: *nassati* HOS). ettāvatā
 tesatṭhi kappā atītā honti. etth' antare udakena nassanavāram
 sampattam pi paṭibāhitvā laddhokāso vāto paripuṇṇacatu-
 saṭṭhikappāyuke subhakiñhe viddhamento lokam vināseti.

4. *Lokaprajñapti*²

'jig pa ni rnam pa gsum ste, mes 'jig pa dañ, chus 'jig pa
 dañ, rluñ gis 'jig pa'o ... mes 'jig pa lan bdun žiñ chus 'jig
 pa lan cig, chus 'jig pa lan bdun žiñ rluñ gis 'jig pa lan cig
 'byuñ ño.

5. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*³

kena punah krameṇaitāḥ samvartanyo bhavanti? niranta-
 ram tāvat *saptāgninā* sapta samvartanyas tejasā bhavanti.

¹ Henry Clarke Warren and Dharmananda Kosambi (eds.), *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosācariya* (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 41, 1950; reprint Delhi, 1989), Chap. XIII, ¶65, p. 356,8–14 (= HOS); Thai script edition, *Visuddhimagga nāma pakaranavisesassa dutiyo bhāgo*, 5th ed., Mahāmukūṭa-rājavidyālaya, Bangkok, B.E. 2515 [1972], p. 269,7–14 (= Mm). The prose is incorporated into the *Sārasaṅgaha* (p. 314,8–16) and *Lokadīpakaśāra* (p. 512,25–13,3).

² 'Jig rten bžag pa, Q5597, Vol. 115, minon pa khu, 54b4–7.

³ P. Pradhan (ed.), *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu, (revised 2nd ed.) Patna, 1975, 191,6–18; Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (ed.), *Abhidharmakośa & Bhāṣya* of Acharya Vasubandhu with *Sputārthā* Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra, Part II, Varanasi, 1971, pp. 565,4–566. See also Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, tome II, reprinted Brussels, 1971, pp. 216–17. The text of *Kośakārikā* III, 102 is given in bold type.

tataḥ *adbhir ekā saptānām tejaḥsamvartanīnām* anantaram
adbhiḥ samvartanī bhavati. evam gate 'dbhiḥ saptake punah,
tejasā saptakah etena kramenāpsamvartanīnām gate saptake
punah tejaḥsamvartanīnām saptako bhavati. *paścād vāyu-*
samvartanī tataḥ paścād ekā vāyusamvartanī bhavati.
saṭpañcāśat tejaḥsamvartanyah saptāpsamvartanyah ekā
vāyusamvartanī. evam ca prajñaptibhāṣyam sunītaṁ bhavati
catuhṣaṣṭi kalpāḥ śubhakṛtsnānām devānām āyuhpramāṇam
iti.

Nandapurī

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Intermediate Existence and the Higher Fetters in the Pāli Nikāyas

This article concerns what the Pāli Nikāyas have to say about the *antarāparinibbāyin* non-returners and their desire for existence and the life in an intermediate existence.¹ I shall argue that this material casts doubt on a major point of Theravāda orthodoxy.

The following are the four noble persons presented in Pali Buddhism :

1. The stream-enterer (*sotāpanno*)
2. The once-returner (*sakadāgāmī*)
3. The non-returner (*anāgāmī*)
4. The arahant (*araham*) (S V 200).

The Buddha stated that it was only in his teaching that one could find these four noble persons.² The meanings of

¹I am grateful to Professor Richard F. Gombrich (University of Oxford) for his suggestions which helped me to improve the content of this article. I also appreciate the help given by Professor George D. Bond and the late Professor Edmund F. Perry (Northwestern University) in articulating my initial thoughts into an article.

²It is not difficult to understand why Buddhist teaching was so appealing to many sorts of people. It seems Buddhism's diverse ways of presenting many noble stages and persons could embrace a variety of spiritual needs and levels of spiritual development. Buddhism could introduce arahantship here and now for those who came to it seeking no more rebirths. It could offer the stage of non-return for those who came with the aspiration to have an experience in a higher world before attaining the final goal. It could offer the stage of once-return for those who would like to come back to this world one more time to have more experiences as humans before attaining the supreme goal. Finally, it could offer the stage of stream-entry for those who are not really tired of either world but would like to have an assurance of attaining the supreme goal one day. This is also evident from the fact that all the arahants that we find in the Nikāyas are either monks or nuns. There is no reference to living lay